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## LABOR COLONIES AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

THE general principle which underlies the different forms of the labor colony is, "work, not alms". The excuse offered by the able-bodied applicant for relief is, "I can get no work"; the answer of the labor colony is, "Here it is!" The theory of the labor colony is that it offers work on subsistence terms to those who are unable to obtain work and wages under the conditions of ordinary industrial life. Such applicants are equally unable to organize their own labor, and to get any one else to organize it for them. The theory of the labor colony thus depends upon the assumption or the fact that there are among those who form the heterogeneous mass of the unemployed, some who would work if they could get work to do. The interest of the authorities in the labor colony system lies in the circumstance that if the labor colony system can offer work to everyone who has no work otherwise, then the vagrancy law may be put stringently in force, the unemployed rogue put in prison, and the idle "chivvied" into the colony with the alternative of being shut up in the jail. The interest of the general public in the labor colony system lies in the promise it offers of being an effectual, if rather expensive, method of charitable relief. The interest of the economist lies in the circumstance that the labor colony has been in extensive operation for a sufficient length of time to develop certain tendencies of economic and sociological bearing.

The labor colony is not a new idea. I have elsewhere<sup>1</sup> given a list of some projects which involved the establishment of institutions more or less accurately entitled to the name. The institution most closely resembling the modern labor colony, was the Parish Farm, which with the House of Industry<sup>2</sup> existed in England at least from the beginning of the eighteenth century, until it was abandoned on the recommendation of the Poor Law

<sup>1</sup>"Setting the Poor on Work," *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1893.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

Commissioners of 1834. The reason of this recommendation was that the Parish Farms "had failed of their objects, and had been proved to be sources of malversation"<sup>1</sup>. But the abolition of the Parish Farm in England did not remove the apparent need for some institution for the "unemployed". This need was met by temporary measures of various kinds.<sup>2</sup> When exceptionally severe depression of industry has thrown large numbers of persons out of employment in England, it has been customary to institute relief works where for some return (adequate or inadequate, mostly the latter) relief in kind or in money has been given to the "unemployed". Recently closer study of the results of these temporary measures has revealed the fact that many of those who present themselves on such occasions have been in a chronic state of want of employment, and cannot legitimately be said to be suffering from the depression of trade in general. They are habitually out of work, and after a brief experience of relief labor, they tend to lapse into their chronic condition, sometimes even before the offer of relief work is withdrawn. Not only do such incidents discourage the benevolent persons who organize the relief,—perhaps a minor affair; but they suggest that much of the genuinely temporary distress of industrial crises goes unrelieved because of the expenditure of a large part of the relief funds upon distress which is not temporary and which is not due to the particular industrial crisis in question; they suggest also that positive injury is done by temporary relief work, in attracting to particular neighborhoods and in aiding in the general maintenance of a class that may be called the "unemployed" by profession. How to eliminate the worthless from the worthy, the chronically irregular from the temporarily suffering, or even how to avoid being swamped by the former to the total exclusion of the latter, has been the problem of every relieving agency that has attempted to deal with tempo-

<sup>1</sup> *First Annual Report Poor Law Commissioners*, 1835, p. 11. For extended reasons, see *Report of 1834*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of some of these temporary measures see *The Unemployed*, Parl. Paper. London, 1893 (forthcoming).

rary crises.<sup>1</sup> These discouraging incidents have led to demands that some permanent reservoir should be devised for the purpose of taking up the unemployed, in order permanently to contain the class. In this reservoir the "out-of-works" would be employed, perhaps improved, and then sent back to ordinary industrial life when places in it could be found for them. The general principle of the admission of the "right to work" by statutory or social institutions such as the projected "reservoir", is open to question. It has indeed been hotly questioned alike by Mr. Spencer and Mr. Huxley. I am not concerned at the moment to discuss the general principle, what I desire to do is to examine the effects of the adoption of the scheme, as they have actually disclosed themselves in the places where the scheme has been carried into practice.

It is necessary first to know who are the "unemployed". Leaving aside the invalid unemployed whose case demands separate treatment, the *able-bodied unemployed* may be divided into two main classes:

*First.* Those who possess resources of their own, or theirs by loan, by donation from relatives or friends, or by benefit from funds to a share of which they were entitled, as friendly societies, trade union out-of-work benefits, and the like.

*Second.* Those who possess inadequate or no resources, and who immediately or soon after ceasing to be unemployed, are destitute of the means of life.

The first class do not really constitute a section of the unemployed problem, though prolonged lack of employment may cause those who have occupied a place in it to drop into the second. The "unemployed" of the problem are to be found in the second class. This order may be subdivided as follows:

*First.* There are those who drop into it from the class above, who are, by trade misfortune exclusively, driven reluctantly to seek public aid.

*Second.* There are those who have throughout their industrial life hovered on the margin of employment. From defects in

<sup>1</sup> See forthcoming Parliamentary Paper quoted above.

capacity, power of sustained effort, temper or other personal and social characteristics, they have been dispensed with wherever there came need to dispense with anyone. They belong to the class of the partially futile ; they are employed intermittently, and they are afflicted with the cumulative effects of intermittency of employment.

*Third.* There are those who, without possessing serious personal or social vices, are chronically unemployed—the wholly futile, who are unable now to get, as they have been unable formerly to keep, any employment, even of a transient kind. Among these are beggars in various degrees, from the shame-faced beggar to the professional begging letter-writer.

*Fourth.* These three classes are still above the line of crime. They are not criminals, though they tend to gravitate into the criminal ranks. The fourth class is the class of criminals and semi-criminals, whose want of employment is due chiefly to their having been convicted of crime. That such men have been in prison is as a rule the all-sufficing reason why they should not be employed.

In all the classes there are some whose presence there is due to bad heredity or example, some whose poverty is due to drunkenness, or to the unrestrained indulgence of sexual passion, some who have lost the "will to live," and who have dropped from one stage to another through sheer want of nervous force. Some few are suffering from mental disease induced by their mode of life or otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

These four steps of the downward ladder are occupied, now to crowded excess, now more sparsely, by human beings below par. The question is, what is to be done with them ? They may in some measure be the products of an evil social system, but even the alteration of the system might not be effectual in saving them. There is therefore something to be said for those who adopt an attitude of indifference to the study of the larger social movement, and simply ask themselves, what can we do here and

<sup>1</sup> The treatment of the aged and invalid poor is another department of the subject.

now for this "mass of human sludge"? But nature does not temper her forces to benevolent enterprises, and she has apparently plans of her own which sometimes overthrow the most carefully prepared designs. The Labor Colonies in Europe are, as might be expected, meeting with serious difficulties arising naturally from their attempt to deal with so varied material in a field where the influences are so complex and the cross currents so numerous.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF LABOR COLONIES.

Under the name of the Parish Farm, the labor colony has been developed, not alone in England, but also in Denmark, where at present there are about three hundred pauper farms affording employment for about 10,000 persons.<sup>1</sup>

Under the name of *Colonies de Bienfaisance*, labor colonies have existed in Belgium since 1810. Under the names of Beggar and Free Colonies, they have existed in Holland since 1818; while in Switzerland at Gampelen in Canton Berne, there is a somewhat similar institution.<sup>2</sup>

The most recent fresh developments are the colony founded by the municipality of Paris at La Chalmelle, near Esternay, in the department of Marne in France; the Hadleigh Farm in Essex, England, founded by the Salvation Army; and the small farm in Westmoreland, founded by the English Colonization Society.

By far the most extensive and instructive of the developments of the Labor Colony system are, however, the Arbeiter-Kolonien of Germany with their related Verpflegungsstationen, Herbergen zur Heimath and Heimath-Kolonie.

Although all of the institutions named may be fairly described as Labor Colonies, they vary in important details. The following exhibits their leading features.

<sup>1</sup>"The Conditions of State Relief in Denmark," by C. H. LEPPINGTON, *Economic Journal* (London) vol. iii. p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> The Tannenhof.

State Institutions:

Hoogstraeten, Merxplas, and Wortel in Belgium. Veenhuizen, Ommerschans, and Hoorn in Holland.

Institutions under local (municipal or parochial) management:

La Chalmelle in France. Pauper Farms in Denmark.

Institutions founded and administered by voluntary agency:

Frederiksoord, Wilhelmsoord, and Wilhelminasoord in Holland.

All the German Arbeiter-Kolonien, also the Colonies in Switzerland and in England.

Institutions partially or wholly penal in their discipline:

Hoogstraeten and Merxplas, Veenhuizen, Ommerschans, and Hoorn. The German Corrections-Anstalten.

Institutions in which unemployed may be committed by magistrates' order with the consent of the committed:

Wortel.

Institutions in which inebriates are received for fixed periods with consent:

Salem near Rickling, Echhof, and Friedrichs-hütte in Germany.

Institutions to which there is unrestricted access so long as there is room, and from which the colonist may go when he pleases:

All the German Arbeiter-Kolonien.

Institutions to which access is afforded only conditionally, by recommendation of societies or responsible persons:

Frederiksoord and subsidiary colonies. La Chalmelle.

Institutions, admission to which is limited to those whose domicile is within a certain given area:

La Chalmelle.

Institutions in which religious services are provided for by the constitution:

The Belgian colonies. The German colonies. The Salvation Army colony at Hadleigh.

Institutions which are wholly secular:

The Dutch colonies. La Chalmelle.

Institutions for infirm unemployed (males):

Hoogstraeten.

Penal Institutions for vagrants and beggars (males):

Veenhuizen. Ommerschans.

Penal Institutions for vagrants and beggars (females):

Hoorn.

Institutions for able-bodied males exclusively:

Twenty-five German Arbeiter-Kolonien. La Chalmelle.  
Wortel. Hadleigh.

Institutions into which families of unemployed are admitted:

Frederiksoord and subsidiary colonies. The Heijmath-Kolonie of Friedrichwilhelmsdorf, in Germany. The Home Colonization Society's colony in Westmoreland, England.

#### RISE OF THE COLONY SYSTEM.

In studying the labor colony system<sup>1</sup> it is necessary to grasp clearly the differences in economical conditions of the several countries in which the system has been adopted, and even to estimate to what extent the system has been indebted to the enthusiasm and sagacity of individuals. In Holland, the system owes its foundation and a large measure of its success to General van den Bosch, whose experience in the regimentation of laborers of an inferior grade in Java suggested to him the methods which he adopted in Holland. In Germany, the system owes its existence to Pastor von Bodelschwingh and to the *Bodelschwinghgeist* with which he has inspired a numerous school. The recent foundation of the colony of La Chalmelle was due to the enthusiast, M. Georges Berry. Throughout, the maxim "first find your madman" has been potent in the development of the labor colony system.

The Dutch and Belgian systems had their rise while the Netherlands were suffering from severe depression. In 1810, the *code pénal* prescribed the establishment of *Dépôts de mendicité*, in order to meet by state action the situation created by decaying agriculture and commerce, coupled with the traditional

<sup>1</sup> For detailed description and criticism see *Reports on the Elberfeld Poor Law System and German Workmen's Colonies*, Parliamentary Paper, c. 5341, London, 1888; *The Dutch Home Labor Colonies* by H. G. WILLINK, London, 1889; *Report on Labor Colonies*, by J. MAVOR, J. R. MOTION, J. SPEIR and R. P. WRIGHT, Glasgow, 1892; *Report on Labor Colonies* to H.M. Board of Trade by J. MAVOR, Parliamentary Paper, London, 1893.



tendency to alms-seeking which is especially characteristic of Belgium. Such *dépôts de mendicite* were founded by the State or under State control in Belgium ; but in Holland the establishment of beggar colonies was left to private benevolence.

In Germany it was not until 1882 that the labor colony movement began, and then it had its rise during the industrial depression following the inflation that immediately succeeded the Franco-German war. The rise of the German Labor Colony may be ascribed to two influences :

*First.* There was the rise of the humanitarian spirit, part no doubt of the general movement, but directed largely, so far as actual social schemes are concerned, by Bodelschwingh and those whom he influenced in the Catholic as well as in the Protestant church. On this side the labor colony movement is ethical in its chief aims. "The special aim is to secure moral elevation."<sup>1</sup>

*Second.* There was the semi-political influence arising from the assumed need of offering, from a conservative stand-point, positive means of social amelioration as a counterfoil to the revolutionary propaganda of the Social Democrats.

The German labor colony system is thus the outcome on the one hand of religious humanitarianism, and on the other of political conservatism. It is a movement initiated by aristocrats and carried on by *bourgeoisie*. Classes that might tend to produce social disorder are fed, clothed, housed, kept at work and in moderate contentment, while they are preached to and are moralized up to a certain point. The labor colony thus also secured its financial and administrative basis. The religious enthusiasm of which it was symptomatic drew to it the necessary men, and the class interests, if not even also to some extent, the national and social interests which it tended to conserve, drew to it the necessary money.

The foundation of the colony at La Chalmelle by the municipality of Paris is due to imitation rather than to originality.

<sup>1</sup> *Protokoll über die dritte ordentliche : Versammlung des Centralvorstandes deutscher Arbeiter-Kolonien, Bielefeld, 1886, p. 93.*

After a visit to the colonies in Holland and Germany, M. Georges Berry succeeded in inducing the municipal council of Paris to found a colony upon somewhat similar lines.<sup>1</sup> The colony of the Home Colonization Society at Westmoreland is a copy of the Dutch Home Labor Colony, while the Farm of the Salvation Army at Hadleigh<sup>2</sup> is a copy, with the slightest of modifications, of the Arbeiter-Kolonien. All these three latter have had their rise during a period of commercial depression, when the pressure upon relieving agencies seemed to demand permanent provision for those who were able and not unwilling to work, could they succeed in finding some capitalist "to exploit them".

As a preliminary to a criticism of the methods, it seems necessary to describe briefly the two types of the labor colony—the Dutch and the German. Historically, the Dutch is the first.

#### THE DUTCH SYSTEM.

The chief feature of the Dutch System, as carried on at Fredriksoord, is the recognition of the family of the unemployed. The unemployed man is taken there with his family. They are provided with land, a house, and some stock. In the first instance they are admitted as laborers (*kolonisten-arbeideren*). While possessing this status they work for specified wages on the farms belonging to the colony, in addition to the work they must necessarily perform for the cultivation of the land allotted to them. After they have spent some time (variable) as laborers<sup>3</sup>, they are at the discretion of the superintendent raised to the status of free farmers (*vrijboeren*). The free farmers are not required to work on the colony farms; although, if they wish, they may be so employed; they are expected to devote the whole of their time to the cultivation of their own allotments. Each free farmer's farm consists of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hectares ( $6\frac{1}{4}$  acres) of land which has already

<sup>1</sup> The chief differences are suggested in the table given above. See also *Report*, London, 1893, cited *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> For description see *Glasgow Report*, 1892, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> The laborer rarely earns sufficient to support himself and his family until he has been in the colony two years.

at the expense of the colony been brought into cultivation. For this the farmer pays a rent of from 50 florins to 70 florins (from \$20 to \$28) per annum. Each farmer also receives on credit a cow valued at about \$48, and rye sown in the land, valued at about \$20. This amount (\$68) he is expected to pay at the rate of \$3 per annum. In addition to the stock supplied by the colony on credit each farmer generally succeeds in acquiring within a few years two or three milch sheep, and in raising four or five pigs per season. Their principal produce is potatoes, of which they are able to market about 300 hectoliters in an average season. The standard of comfort of the free farmers and of the laborers is neither better nor worse than is that of the neighboring peasantry. The houses of both classes of colonists were for the most part built upwards of seventy years ago, and are very defective from a sanitary point of view.

The colonists enter the colony at all ages. They are sent by local committees, and the cost of establishing them in the colony is expected to be defrayed by these. The population of Frederiksoord, with its subsidiary colonies of Wilhemsoord and Wilhelminasoord, has been subject to considerable fluctuations. From 1873 it declined gradually from 2,007, until 1886 when it reached 1,736. Since 1887, however, the population has been steadily increasing owing to a falling off in the number of exits, and also in part to a diminution of the death rate; in 1892 there was a population of 1,863. This number comprised 214 free farmers and their families, and 91 laborers and their families, together with 198 boarders who are chiefly children paid for by local societies. These children are the offspring of criminal or pauper parents, who are removed from injurious surroundings in order that they may be boarded with the colonists. Children of from four to eight years of age are preferred, after that age they are difficult to deal with. During the past few years there has been an annual average of 35.2 births and 24 deaths.

The following statistics of fifty families of free farmers and laborers now in the colonies, afford instructive illustration of the bearing of the colony system upon the population question.

STATISTICS OF FIFTY COLONISTS.<sup>1</sup>

Number of cases in which <i>one</i> parent had been born	
in one of the Dutch colonies	- - - 23 or 46%
Number of cases in which both parents had been	
born in one of the Dutch colonies	- - - 11 or 22%
Number of children born to colonists prior to entry	
into colony	- - - - - 28
Number of children born to colonists in colony	- 237
Total number of children born to 50 colonists	- 265
Number of children per family	- - - 5.3
Number of colonists without children	- - - 1

The average annual number of new entrants (families) into the colonies during the last ten years was 6. The average annual number of laborers raised to the status of free farmers during the past ten years was 3.8.

The establishment of the free farmers and also of the laborers involves credit. They get their stock and pay for it by annual instalments. The result of this system is that the free farmers are almost all in debt to the colony. This debt is increased from time to time by loans made during a bad season or on account of illness. The average amount of debt due to the colony by the free farmers is 129 florins (\$51.6) per farmer. Two or three farmers are upwards of \$200 in debt, while 60 or 70 are from \$40 to \$120 in debt. The total indebtedness of the free farms is \$11,200.<sup>2</sup>

A leading feature of the Dutch system is the securing of situations for the children of colonists when they attain the age of 20 or 22. Many are sent to the Dutch East Indies and enter the service of planters. Some of the females leave the colony and afterwards return as the wives of new entrants. A few marry in and remain in the colony.

The children are compulsorily educated. There are five

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from *Report on Labor Colonies*, by J. MAVOR, Parliamentary Paper, London, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> See *Report*, 1893. In general, where the details given are not the result of personal inquiry on the spot, references to sources are given in this *Report*.

Government schools in the colony where elementary education is given. In addition to these, three technical schools are maintained at the expense of the colony. The children and youths (male) are obliged to attend these schools, while the girls are obliged to attend the sewing school. The technical schools are : 1, Forestry ; 2, Agriculture ; 3, Horticulture. These schools are perhaps the best feature of the institution. They are exceedingly well equipped, and due regard is paid to practical as well as to theoretic instruction. The colony is not established upon a religious basis.

The colonies have been from time to time reported upon by poor law and agricultural experts. The chief criticisms have been those of Sir John MacNeil, who visited the colonies in 1848 ; and of Mr. Willink who visited them in 1889. Both of these criticisms seem to me rather unsympathetic. It is hardly necessary to consider them in detail ; but they seem to me to miss at once some of the good points and some of the bad ones of the Dutch system.

These good points may be said to be the definite recognition of the family and the frank acceptance of the bitter truth that the adult recipient of relief is irredeemable. He may be kept in a state of moderate comfort at some cost ; but it is hopeless to attempt to send him back into the world again, to fail once more, and to lapse sooner or later to the position of a colonist. The hope of the Dutch system lies with the children. In a certain number of cases it would appear that the education conveyed in the colony schools has been efficacious in conquering the influence of bad heredity and evil early example. On the other side it is doubtful whether the boarding of children of one set of paupers with another set is an advantageous plan. The tendency of the directorate of the colonies must necessarily be to board such children with those of the free farmers or laborers who are running into debt to the colony. The amount paid by charitable societies or by the poor law authorities for the maintenance of these children can by this means be set off against the debt of the colonists. The meaning of this is simply that the

children are placed not with the best among the colonists, but with the least efficient.<sup>1</sup>

While the children are thus taken care of and helped to acquire a sound industrial training, there can be little doubt that, as shown by the statistics of the fifty families given above, there is a tendency to too great prolificacy. This prolificacy arises no doubt from the guarantee of subsistence coupled with the low standard of comfort and the customary diet.<sup>2</sup>

The conventional criticism that the Dutch system involves a large expenditure in relation to the number benefited is quite justified ; but a large expenditure is inseparable from the idea. The chief virtue of the administrators of the Dutch colonies is that they realize this to the full. They know that to deal with the submerged is a costly process. The actual cost per family is a little difficult to ascertain from the accounts ; but my calculations, for which the authorities of the colonies are in no way responsible, show that the cost per family per annum is from \$20 to \$35 exclusive of the interest on the capital invested. Including the interest of the capital invested the cost is about \$125 per family per annum.

The three points which distinguish the Dutch colonies are these: 1, the element of permanence—the free farmers are there for life if they conduct themselves properly ; 2, the recognition of and provision for family life ; and 3, the education of the children and the placing of them in situations outside the colony.

#### THE GERMAN COLONY SYSTEM.

The German colony system is different from the Dutch in all the three features just named. 1, Residence in the colonies is

<sup>1</sup> Some of them are placed with widows, but this also is a doubtful policy on other grounds.

<sup>2</sup> There is much force in Malthus's criticism of this very tendency. Referring to Arthur Young's proposals for applying wastes to the better maintenance of the poor, Malthus says : "Mr. Young has treated the question as if it were merely 'How to provide in the cheapest and best manner for a given number of people?' If this had been the sole question, it would never have taken so many hundred years to resolve. But the real question is, How to provide for those who are in want in such a manner as to prevent the continual accumulation of their numbers, and it will readily occur to the reader that the plan of giving them land and cows can not promise much in this respect." *Essay on Population*, p. 456.

limited as to time<sup>1</sup>; 2, Men only are admitted to the colonies; 3, There is no provision for education for any one.

There are now twenty-six German Arbeiter-kolonien; twenty-three of these are farm colonies, two are city industrial colonies, and one is a home colony.

The farm colonies are situated for the most part on reclaimable land. The colonists are of one order only; they all correspond to the Dutch laborers. All are housed in dormitories and all meet at meals, and work in gangs in the fields, in the garden, on the roads, in the forests, in rudimentary industries, in farm-yard or in domestic service. All comers, excepting a few "black sheep", who have wearied the exemplary patience of the directors of the colonies, are admitted without question otherwise than for statistical purposes. They may have come direct from prison, they may have been convicted of half the crimes on the statute book, they may have been drunkards, and may even be known to indulge in spells of drunkenness; but if they are only sober at the moment of entrance they are admitted, fed, clothed, and employed. The idea is simple, and undeniably fine, "Whosoever will may come!"

From the date of the opening of the first colony (Wilhelmsdorf) in March, 1882, until 30th June, 1893, there have been admitted into the twenty-five Arbeiter-kolonien 63,394 persons.<sup>2</sup> There are at present places for 3,044 in these twenty-five colonies; in the end of June, 1893, there were 2,060 colonists in residence.<sup>3</sup> The ages of the colonists admitted are as follows:<sup>4</sup>

	Per cent.
Under 20 years of age	5.6
20 to 25	10.5
25 to 30	13.3
30 to 45	44.4
45 to 50	10.9
50 to 60	12.1
60 and upwards	3.2
	<hr/> 100.0

<sup>1</sup> Excepting in one Heimath kolonie which is a compromise between the Dutch and German systems, see below.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Arbeiter-Kolonien Zehnter Jahrgang*, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> BERTHOLD, *Die Deutschen Arbeiter-Kolonien*, 1893, p. 119.

Thus 57.7% of the colonists are in the prime of life from 25 to 45 ; while 15.11% are youths ; and not more than 3.2% are fairly entitled to be regarded as aged.

The causes of resort to the colony are difficult to ascertain. No statistics of these are kept by the directors of the colonies, and the information is not always easily obtained either from the police records or from the colonists themselves. The causes are, as a rule, complex. The following table, however, illustrates the question of cause of resort :

CAUSES OF RESORT TO THE COLONY OF 117 COLONISTS IN WILHELMSDORF,  
8TH AUGUST, 1893.<sup>1</sup>

CAUSES.	Im- prisoned.	Not Im- prisoned.	Doubtful.	Total.
Certainly inability to obtain employment, without visible specific cause, - - - -	—	2	—	2
Apparent inability to obtain employment, without visible specific cause, - - - -	—	1	—	1
Certainly inability to obtain employment owing to having been in prison, - - - -	3	—	—	3
Apparent inability to obtain employment owing to having been in prison, without other visible specific cause, - - - -	45	—	—	45
Drink as a certain specific cause, - - - -	8	7	1	16
Drink and laziness as specific causes, - - - -	—	1	—	1
Drink as a probable specific cause, - - - -	3	1	—	4
Sent by relations, owing to alleged bad conduct, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Sent by parish with consent—cripple, - - - -	—	1	—	1
Sent by parish with consent—for bad conduct, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Epileptic, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Bad conduct, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Domestic misfortune, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Domestic misfortune and sickness, - - - - -	—	1	—	1
Confirmed begging, - - - - -	1	—	—	1
Uselessness, - - - - -	—	1	—	1
On trial by institution (special case), - - - -	—	1	—	1
Unknown causes, - - - - -	—	31	2	33
	65	47	3	115
Percentage, - - - - -	56.5	40.9	2.6	100.0

This classification shows that in about 57 per cent. of the number of cases investigated, previous imprisonment was the

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from *Report*, 1893, cited above. Cf. for causes of Stepney Pauperism, C. BOOTH, *Pauperism, A Picture*, p. 3.



chief or the contributory cause of want of employment. In 10 per cent. of the cases there were found to be various specific causes. In 33 per cent. of the cases the causes were undiscoverable with any reasonable degree of certainty. A certain proportion of this kind of the whole, may have consisted of members of class one in the classification of unemployed given above. It is however to be noted that trade misfortune is absent from the list of specific causes of want of employment in this group.

The proportion of the above 117 colonists who had been imprisoned, viz., 56.5 per cent., is striking enough; but this particular group was unusually free from the taint of the jail. The plain fact is that the colonies have become the resort of ex-convicts.

	Percentage of Colonists Admitted.	
	Imprisoned.	Not Imprisoned.
Statistics of 20 Colonies, 1887-1889, <sup>1</sup>	76.9	23.1
Statistics of 22 Colonies, 1889-1891, <sup>2</sup>	75.9	24.1

It is small wonder that this should be the case. The rigid oversight kept by the German police of all workmen; the necessity for exhibiting "papers" on every occasion, in seeking lodgings as in seeking work, causes the ex-convict to be identified at once, and social prejudice, as well as natural caution, does the rest. "The chain clanks about the prisoner all his life long." The colony is the only open door. Of 131 colonists in Wilhelmsdorf on August 9, 1893, 67 had been imprisoned. Of these three had arrived in the colony direct from prison. These 67 individuals represented 96 cases of punishment, as follows:

	Cases.
Locked up for drunkenness, or begging,	46
Prison,	32
House of Correction,	13
State Prison,	5
	<hr/> 96

<sup>1</sup> BERTHOLD, *Statistik Der Deutschen Arbeiter-Kolonien*, 1887-1889, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> BERTHOLD, *Die Deutschen Arbeiter-Kolonien*, 1889-1891, p. 135.

The order given discloses the relative seriousness of the offences. The colonies are really performing an admirable function as a discharged prisoners' aid society on a large scale. The result, however, of the concentration within their gates of a large number of ex-convicts, some of them repeatedly convicted, sufficiently accounts for the absence of the unemployed workman with a clean record. Apart altogether from his aversion to the colony as a *bourgeois* institution invented for the purpose of keeping him occupied and quiet, he dislikes the company he finds there and would rather do many things than work in a gang with those who have but recently emerged from the walls of a jail.

The class of unemployed who frequent the German colonies is, to the extent of 75 per cent., that designated above as the third class—the criminal or semi-criminal. The balance of 25 per cent. of the colonists belongs to the second class—the futile, with occasionally a drunkard who is sober while he is in the colony and lapses whenever he leaves it.

The colonies have a regulation against the admission of dipsomaniacs; but this can hardly be said to work in practice. If a man is not actually in a state of intoxication he is admitted. If he leaves the colony without permission and returns in a state of intoxication he may be dismissed. Some of the most useful colonists are addicted to drink. The drink question is, however, regarded as properly subject to special treatment. Associated with the labor colony system, although not an integral part of it, there are three asylums for inebriates, viz: Friedrichshütte and Echhof near Bielefeld, and Salem near Rickling. As a condition of admission to these asylums inebriates must enter into an obligation to remain for two years. They are employed in agricultural and other labor. Their board (from \$100 to \$150 a year) must be paid. This precludes the very poor, unless their maintenance is defrayed by charitable agencies.

For the first fourteen days after his admission the colonist receives no wages. Afterwards he is credited with wages at the rate of from 5 cents to 7 cents a day, in addition to his food and

lodging. He is supplied with clothes on credit in the same way as the Dutch free-farmer is supplied with stock, and precisely the same result ensues. He is from the beginning involved in debt, trifling absolutely but large relatively to his extremely slender resources. The result is that he leaves the colony in debt. There is indeed a positive inducement for him to go off on *Wanderschaft*, as he thereby succeeds in shaking himself free from his burdens. The loss to each colony is insignificant, about \$165 a year, but the principle is defective.

The frequency of readmissions is one of the great problems of the German colonies. In order to avoid rendering the parish in which the colony is situated liable for the permanent support of the colonist should he become a pauper, the colony does not permit anyone to remain for a longer period than two years, and in order to extend its benefits as widely as possible it discourages residence for a longer period than four months. But a colonist may leave the colony and return within a few weeks. One case, not an exceptional one, may be taken as an example.

G ———<sup>1</sup>, age 52, single, field laborer, Catholic, not convicted, arrived at Wilhelmsdorf in the end of September, 1885. He left on 9th November in same year. In September, 1886, he appeared again at this same colony, and left on 26th March, 1887, having spent the winter there. On the 1st June of the same year, after having spent two months in the outer world, he arrived at Dauelsberg, another colony in the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. He remained at Dauelsberg for about six weeks, and again betook himself to Wilhelmsdorf, which he seems to have preferred since he remained there from August 3, 1887, until 10th March, 1888. On 18th July he reappeared at Wilhelmsdorf after an absence of three months, and left again in the middle of October, 1888. In December, 1888, he returned and remained until March, 1889. In June, 1888, he returned and remained until March, 1890. In August, 1890, he returned and remained until March, 1891. He seems to have felt that his visits

<sup>1</sup> This case is taken from my own notes. For numerous cases of the same kind, see DR. BERTHOLD'S *Statistik*, 1891 and 1893; also *Report*, London, 1893.

to the Protestant colony of Wilhelmsdorf for the winter were occurring with monotonous regularity, for he spent the winter of 1891-92 at the Catholic Colony of Maria-Veen. He left this colony in March, 1892, and in September of the same year he reappeared at Wilhelmsdorf, where he remained for five weeks only, and for the first time for seven years spent the winter elsewhere than in a colony. He returned, however, to Wilhelmsdorf early in February, 1893, and in the month of August of the same year was still a colonist.

The following table exhibits the frequency of readmissions of those admitted during the two periods 1887-1889 and 1889-1891.<sup>1</sup>

No. of times admitted.	1887-1889.	1889-1891.	No. of times admitted.	1887-1889.	1889-1891.
1 times.	6286	5956	10 times.	4	29
2 —	2207	2240	11 —	4	12
3 —	1003	1166	12 —	—	6
4 —	467	722	13 —	—	6
5 —	235	440	14 —	—	—
6 —	118	252	15 —	—	—
7 —	57	137	16 —	—	2
8 —	12	72	17 —	—	1
9 —	9	47			
			Total admissions.	10403	11088

The percentage of the total number who were admitted to the colonies during 1889-1891, who entered the colonies for the first time was 53.9, while the percentage entering for the second or greater number of times was 46.1 %.<sup>2</sup>

The percentage of persons discharged between 1887 and 1889 who returned during the period, was 23.4. The percentage of persons discharged between 1889 and 1891, who returned during the period was 28.1.<sup>3</sup> The percentage of convicted to the number of colonists at each stage of frequency increases with the frequency. Thus of those who had been in the colonies only once

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Table F., BERTHOLD, 1887-1889, p. 117, and *ibid.* 1889-1891, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from Table K., BERTHOLD, *op. cit.* p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> See BERTHOLD, *op. cit.* p. 4.

up till March 1, 1891, 70 per cent. had been convicted. Of those who had been from five to seven times, 90 per cent. had been convicted. While of those who had been twelve times and upwards all had been convicted.

The fact that discharged prisoners so largely frequent the colonies is not looked upon unfavorably by criminalists. It is said that while of those discharged prisoners who do not seek admittance to the colonies, three-fourths relapse and return to prison, only one-fourth of those discharged prisoners who do go to the colonies, have during the past ten years relapsed and returned to prison. They relapse so far as repeated admissions to the colony are concerned; but not so far as repeated committals to prison are concerned<sup>1</sup>.

This frequency of readmissions is partly due to the regulation limiting the period of residence; but the shortness of the period of stay suggests that it is partly also due to the love of wandering characteristic of the German, and to the facilities for wandering which the Verpflegungsstationen and the Herbergen zur Heimath afford him for exercising his passion for *Wanderschaft*<sup>2</sup>.

The following shows the comparative briefness of the period of stay :

STATISTICS OF TWENTY-TWO COLONIES, 1889-1891<sup>3</sup>.

Left after	7	days' stay	6.1	per	cent.	of those discharged.
"	8- 14	"	4.3	"	"	"
"	15- 21	"	4.3	"	"	"
"	22- 35	"	8.5	"	"	"
"	36- 49	"	9.4	"	"	"
"	50- 63	"	8.9	"	"	"
"	64- 77	"	8.5	"	"	"
"	78-105	"	13.6	"	"	"
"	106-147	"	18.6	"	"	"
"	148-203	"	10.3	"	"	"
"	over 203	days	7.5	"	"	"

100.00

<sup>1</sup> HERR VON KOBLINSKI, in meeting of International Criminalist Society in April, 1893, at Berlin. See *Bericht der Dritten Landesversammlung der Internationalen Kriminalistischen Vereinigung*, Berlin, 1893, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> See below.

<sup>3</sup> BERTHOLD, 1889-1891, p. 126.

Thus 83 per cent. of the colonists left after a stay of five months or less in the colony. In addition to the desire to go on *wanderschaft*, which impels colonists to move from one colony to another, the practice of spending the winter in the colony and the summer in the outer world, working or loafing, accounts to some extent for the limitation of stay to a period well within the statutory limit.

NUMBER OF COLONISTS IN TWENTY-FIVE COLONIES IN EACH MONTH FROM JANUARY TILL JUNE, 1893<sup>1</sup>.

	No. of Colonists.	No. of Places.
January, 1893 - - - - -	3,084	3,039
February - - - - -	2,783	3,034
March - - - - -	2,371	3,088
April - - - - -	2,061	3,053
May - - - - -	2,029	3,073
June - - - - -	2,060	3,044

The accommodation of the colonies is thus in the winter taxed to the utmost, even temporary expedients for housing the numerous applicants having to be resorted to, while in the summer the places are not more than two-thirds filled.

The frequency of readmissions results in the colonies being really occupied by a much smaller number of persons than appears at first sight from perusal of the gross numbers.

The 15,425 cases of admissions during 1889-1891 were represented by 11,088 individuals. The number of persons benefited by the colonies is thus really about 60 per cent. of the admissions.

The system of *Naturalverpflegungsstationen* and *Herbergen zur Heimath*, or stations for relief in kind with roadside inns or workmen's lodging houses, is an important adjunct to the labor colony system. It is possible for a tramp or discharged prisoner to work his way through a great part of Germany by means of these relief stations<sup>2</sup>. He may work for a certain number of hours per day, and for this work he may receive

<sup>1</sup> *Die Arbeiter-Kolonie*, February to June, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> For description see *Report*, London, 1893, cited above.

shelter and food sufficient to maintain him until he arrives on foot at the next station. In this way he can go if he cares from one colony to another without expending a copper. The *Herbergen* are used not alone by tramps, but by workmen, students, traveling pastors, and others who desire lodgings at a minimum of cost. Some of these herbergs are quite comfortable lodging houses, clean, airy and orderly; some, on the other hand, are rather squalid. It is probable that a system of inspection will have to be devised for them in order to insure that they do not become as unsanitary as the low lodging houses they were meant to supersede.

It is clear that the relief stations and the herbergs contribute largely to make German labor mobile. A workman may readily transfer himself without cost other than fatigue from one town to another.

The German system<sup>1</sup> of labor colonies as thus described devotes itself entirely to the relief of the man; the family of the man—if he has one—is left out of account. There is a certain justification for this. The classes with which the colonies deal have no families. They have never had any, or they have abandoned them if they had.

PERSONS ADMITTED INTO TWENTY-TWO COLONIES 1892-1891.

	With Domicile.	Without Domicile.
Numbers - - -	4,154	6,935
Percentages - - -	37.5%	62.6%

The following table shows the family condition of the colonists who were admitted into the twenty-five colonies from January to June, 1893:<sup>2</sup>

Single, - - - -	2,988	79.3 per cent.
Married :		
Admitting responsibility, -	227	6.3 per cent.
Separated, - - - -	150	4.0 "
Divorced, - - - -	61	1.6 "
Widowed, - - - -	332	9.0 "

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100.0 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> BERTHOLD, *op. cit.* p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Arbeiter-Kolonie*, 1893.

No doubt some of those who represent themselves as single do so falsely. It is to be noted, however, in reference to this and other items of information about the colonists, that inquiries are made in every case as to the truth of the statements. The information is invariably checked by the police. If the number of those who have left families behind them to make their livelihood as best they may is so small as six per cent., it would be scarcely worth while to inquire how far the labor colony system encourages desertion. Without in any way, however, impugning the accuracy of the statistics, it seems fair to suggest that some of those who represent themselves as single do so falsely, and that there is probably as a contingent result of the labor colony system some slight increase in the amount of relief afforded by other charitable agencies to deserted families. While the effect of the Dutch system was bound to involve population difficulties, the effect of the German colonies in this connection is in the direction of the sterilization of the unfit<sup>1</sup>.

The element of permanence which the Dutch colony possesses and which the German colony does not possess, is pined after by some of the leaders in the German movement.<sup>2</sup> They realize that the frequency of readmissions shows that there is a large number of men who apparently need the discipline of a colony permanently. This feeling has led to the formation near Bremerhaven of a Home colony, the colony of Friedrichwilhelmsdorf, where a system of allotments somewhat on the Dutch model has been set a-going. It is too soon to form any conclusions on the working of this experiment. The same observation applies to the Westmoreland experiment of Mr. Herbert V. Mills.

The Salvation Army Farm, at Hadleigh, in Essex, England,<sup>3</sup> has probably suffered from inefficient administration. During the two years of its existence it has to some extent altered its

<sup>1</sup> It must be observed, however, that the going and coming characteristic of the colony system must result in the neutralization of this tendency to some extent.

<sup>2</sup> *E. g.*, by Pastor Cronmeyer. See his *Eine Zuflucht der Elenden*, Bremerhaven, 1893; and his *Die Heimath Kolonie Friedrichwilhelmsdorf*, Bremerhaven, 1891.

<sup>3</sup> For criticism of this in detail, see *Report*, Glasgow, 1892, p. 9.



character. It has become practically an ordinary farm on which all the skilled work is done by a large number of paid laborers, while the rougher operations are performed by the colonists. Such a method may under proper administration result successfully, although the method of the German and Dutch colonies seems preferable, viz. : to cause the colonists to do all the work.

#### THE ECONOMIC INFLUENCES OF THE COLONIES.

The economic influences of the colonies are as yet largely matters of speculation, because positive evidence on many important points is lacking. Some lines of inquiry may, however, be suggested:

##### 1. The influence of the colonies on the market for labor.

The material which the colonies receive and discharge is not such as could in the nature of things have much influence upon the labor market. The colony has the utmost difficulty in finding situations for its colonists.

DISCHARGES FROM COLONIES<sup>1</sup>.

	Percentage for whom situations were found by the colonies.	Percentage discharged at their own desire.	Percentage dismissed on various grounds.
1885-86 -----	27.4	54.1	18.5
1886-87 -----	24.7	57.8	17.5
1887-89 -----	20.8	60.4	18.8
1889-91 -----	19.7	64.4	15.9

These figures show that the difficulty of obtaining situations, always great, is steadily increasing. Employers who employ the colonists do so because they expect to get labor at a low rate. Such labor is almost invariably inefficient and thus there is a tendency for the colonist to drift back into the colony owing to dissatisfaction resulting from his employment externally.<sup>2</sup>

It may be observed, however, that one of the objects of the

<sup>1</sup> BERTHOLD, 1887-1889, p. 112, and *ibid.* 1889-1891, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> This and other points in connection with the economic influence of the colonies, are more fully discussed in *Report*, London, 1893.

colonies is to replace the fallen laborer in competitive industry ; is so to train him and equip him that he may be freshly encouraged to fight the battle of life ; and that, in so far as the men who leave the colonies do not compete in the labor market, the colony system must be regarded as having failed to secure this particular object. There remains, of course, the answer that the 1,300<sup>1</sup> colonists for whom situations are annually found could not exercise, however efficient they were, any material influence upon the labor market of a nation whose adult male working population numbers upwards of ten millions.

It is, however, difficult to avoid the conclusion that the influence of artificial interferences with the flow of labor is frequently out of proportion to the numbers directly affected, and that the subtle processes which go on in industrial contracts, and which do not appear in any statistics, act as multiplying gear to enlarge the area of effect of apparently insignificant causes.

It appears to me, therefore, that the operations of the colonies may tend to affect, though remotely and obscurely, the rate of wages in the lower grades of skilled and of unskilled labor. This tendency may be invisible, owing to the insignificant operations of the colonies relatively to the operations of external industry, and may even be retarded by other overpowering economic tendencies.<sup>2</sup>

Whether the effect of the colony system be to raise wages or to depress them will depend upon the mode in which the colonies are conducted, and upon the external economic conditions at the time.

It is conceivable that the Labor Colonies might be used as a lever to raise wages by workmen who had fixed a minimum wage for themselves by means of combination, and who claimed

<sup>1</sup> The numbers between 1st April, 1889, and 31st March, 1891, a period of two years, were 2623, or 1311 per year. BERTHOLD, *op. cit.* p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Professor Brentano for the valuable suggestion, that the system of compulsory military service and the extent to which custom regulates wages and prices alike, in Germany, tend to render the influence of the Labor Colonies in this connection nugatory. Professor Victor Böhnert also believes that the Labor Colonies have no influence on either wages or prices.

the shelter of the colonies until this minimum was granted by the employers. I am not aware that the German Colonies have been so used as aids during strikes of workmen.

It might also be urged that the colonies have the effect of raising the wages of labor in the district in which they are situated, in so far as they draw off from the labor market a number of workers who are economically weak, who are prepared to sell their labor for whatever it will fetch, and who are able to subsist upon very slender wages because they have no family ties or dependents,<sup>1</sup> and because their standard of comfort is extremely low.

On the other hand, it might be urged that the *minimum wage* of the colonies would tend to depress wages in the lower grades of labor. The principle upon which the German Colonies have been established involves the payment of a minimum subsistence wage alone. The object of this is to make certain that the colony will be the last resort of the unemployed, that a man will exhaust every means of getting a livelihood before he betakes himself there. This minimum of the colonies is not a family minimum, but an individual minimum, expended in the most economical way that experts in the feeding of large bodies of men can devise<sup>2</sup>. It is indeed a minimum at which it would be very difficult for a man to subsist himself otherwise than in a colony. But residence in the colony involves forfeiture of the luxury of freedom, and the estimate which most men place upon this, might suffice to determine them to work outside the colony for a rate of wages involving a standard of comfort less than they can have in the colony, minus the freedom<sup>3</sup>. There would in this way be a tendency for the wages of low grade labor in the locality to fall to the level of the minimum subsistence wage of the colony. The extent to which this tendency might

<sup>1</sup> Cf. page 49.

<sup>2</sup> For the cost of food at the colonies see *Glasgow Report*, 1892, above cited, pp. 24 and 25.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Report*, London, 1893. Section on "The Colony as a Means of Obtaining Situations."

operate would depend, of course, upon the number of men in the position assumed, and upon the conditions of industry in the district at the time. This tendency to depress wages operating on the side of the workman would also operate on the side of the employer who could, if he chose, obtain labor from the colony at or about the colony minimum,<sup>2</sup> and would, therefore, be disposed to refuse to pay a higher rate even to reputable workmen who might apply.

2. The considerations which apply in the case of the labor market, apply also in the case of the market for goods. From the point of view of economic theory, the operations of the colony must affect both markets; but the actual influence in either case is probably very slight. The quantities of produce sent by the colonies into the market are so small as to affect only to the slightest extent if at all local prices. The colonies are indeed very largely self-contained—by far the larger part of the produce is consumed by the colonists on the farm; and the element of custom is no doubt potent. The manufacture by city colonies, Berlin, for example, of goods for sale, has, however, given rise to dissatisfaction among the traders with whom the colony necessarily competes. The considerations that apply to the sale of the product of convict labor apply also here.

#### CONCLUSION.

It will be evident from the description and criticism of the labor colony system that it only meets the evils caused by fluctuations of industry to a modified extent. It is undeniably a costly form of relief, and it involves dangers which may only be disregarded when the system is carried out on a small scale and when it fails to fulfil the intentions of its promoters. As for its reformatory effect upon the colonists, this is extremely doubtful. The increasing frequency of readmissions and the difficulty experienced by the colonies in obtaining situations disprove the vague statements made by some of the enthusiastic

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Report*, London, 1893. Section on "The Colony as a Means of Obtaining Situations."

advocates of the system. The men are certainly kept right when they are in the colony ; but they as certainly tend to relapse when they leave it.

The organization of industrious men in industrial groups is one thing, the organization of those who have never formed or have lost the "habit of laboring" is quite another thing.

"That the labor colony is a means of employing the discharged prisoner and the vagrant with advantage to society, and on the whole with advantage to the colonists themselves, there can be little doubt. The advantages outweigh the disadvantages. But for the workman who has been accustomed to regular employment, and who is suddenly thrown out, or indeed for the intermittently low-grade workman, especially if he be married, the labor colony is a very questionable resort."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Report*, London, 1893.